

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FAMILY COURT LIAISON ACTIVITIES

Proposed FY 2003 Performance Plan

SUBMITTED TO THE FAMILY COURT OF THE
SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

October 2002

Office of the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders
Prepared in consultation with the following District Agency Stakeholders:

Child and Family Services Agency
Department of Human Services
Department of Mental Health
Department of Health
D.C. Public Schools
D.C. Housing Authority
Metropolitan Police Department
Office of the Corporation Counsel
Office of the Chief Technology Officer

**Proposed Family Court Liaison Plan for the District of Columbia
October 17, 2002**

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA LIAISON ACTIVITIES WITH THE FAMILY COURT

FY 2003 PERFORMANCE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This plan represents the District of Columbia's first report to the Family Court regarding the District's proposed fiscal year 2003 liaison activities for coordinating social and related services for individuals and families served by the Family Court. The following District stakeholders contributed to this report:

- Office of the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders
- Office of the Chief Technology Officer
- Child and Family Services Agency
- Department of Mental Health
- Department of Human Services
- District of Columbia Public Schools
- Department of Health
- D.C. Housing Authority
- Metropolitan Police Department
- Office of the Corporation Counsel

Furthermore, each of these District stakeholders is currently represented on one or more of the following Family Court teams, committees or subcommittees:

- Child Welfare Leadership Team
 - Subcommittee on Performance Measures
- Family Court Implementation Planning Team
 - Subcommittee on Cross-Training Program
- Family Treatment Court Planning Team
 - Subcommittee on Target Population and Eligibility Criteria
 - Subcommittee on Policy and Procedures
 - Subcommittee on Continuum of Care
 - Subcommittee on Management Information Systems

Accordingly, the overall operational framework presented herein will also lay the groundwork for the implementation of liaison activities for the Family Treatment Court pilot calendar scheduled to be launched by the Family Court in March 2003.

PURPOSE AND INTENT OF PLAN

A. Family Court

The purpose and intent of this performance plan is to set forth the overall operational framework for implementing the District's services liaison responsibilities with the Family Court. These responsibilities will include the sharing of appropriate safety assessment, social, diagnostic, educational, health, and mental health information across District agencies to obtain timely and appropriate services for children, individuals and families involved in Family Court proceedings. This report is the FY 2003 Performance Plan for Family Court liaison activities for the period beginning October 1, 2002 and ending September 30, 2003.

This plan will be followed by more concrete actions that are envisioned to include the following:

- Establishment and development of a Family Court case management and calendaring tracking system for family members having related cases pending in one or more branches or calendars of the Family Court or the child protection, ASFA and permanency mediation programs managed by the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Center
- Development and execution of the necessary memoranda of understanding between the District of Columbia and the Family Court regarding the sharing of information and implementation of Family Court and Family Treatment Court liaison activities
- Development and execution of the necessary memoranda of understanding between District agencies and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders to facilitate the sharing of information, pooling interagency resources and coordinating the delivery of services for Family Court liaison referrals
- Establishment of procedures jointly developed by the District and the Family Court for tracking and reporting on information related to the needs, availability, and provision of social and related services for children and families served by the Family Court
- Establishment of procedures jointly developed by the District and the Family Court for Family Court liaison referrals to ensure resolution of service issues

B. Family Treatment Court Pilot Calendar

Pursuant to a memorandum of understanding between the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) and the Department of Health (DOH), Addiction Prevention Recovery Administration (APRA) is in the process of developing and expanding its current capacity to provide substance abuse treatment and related services for CFSA clients. Once a determination is made regarding the total number of residential treatment slots available to women and families in the District, approximately ten (10) of those slots are envisioned to be designated specifically for the Family Treatment Court pilot. In addition, the District has been in discussions with the District of Columbia Pretrial Services Agency and will be submitting a request for the provision of drug-testing services on an as needed, reimbursable basis for Family Treatment Court clients. Although the target population and eligibility criteria have not been firmly established, it is envisioned that during the pilot approximately thirty-five (35) mothers involved in neglect matters before the Family Court will be eligible for the Family Treatment Court pilot calendar. The District will continue to work very closely with the Family Treatment Court planning team and coordinate with the Program Coordinator to identify and facilitate the availability of appropriate substance abuse treatment resources in accordance with the Family Court's planned administration of the pilot.

GOALS OF THE FAMILY COURT ACT OF 2001

The District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001 (the "Act") was enacted into law on January 8, 2002. The Act establishes a Family Court within the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, with jurisdiction over all cases and proceedings previously under the Family Division of the Superior Court. The Act also sets forth the policy of "one judge, one family" as the guiding operational principle of the Family Court.

In addition to the new responsibilities placed on the judicial branch, the Act requires the Mayor of the District of Columbia to appoint a services liaison to the Family Court and ensure that representatives from critical District agencies are available to coordinate the delivery of

social and related services for individuals and families involved in proceedings before the Family Court.

LINKAGE TO EXISTING DISTRICT MULTI-AGENCY EFFORTS

Since the release of the District of Columbia Children and Youth Action Plan: “Safe Passages” in 1999, agencies within the Children, Youth, Families and Elders cluster have already begun to plan and implement multi-agency initiatives and processes to coordinate service delivery for children and families with multiple needs. The Child Safety Net Coordination System (“Safety Net”) and Multi Agency Planning Team (“MAPT”) processes are currently underway.

The Safety Net is a prevention and early intervention initiative. MAPT focuses on developing interagency intervention strategies to address the clinical needs of children facing an out-of-home placement. As described below, Family Court liaison activities may incorporate existing multi-agency planning processes for children and families involved in Family Court proceedings.

OVERVIEW OF FAMILY COURT LIAISON ACTIVITIES

Pursuant to the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, the Family Court liaison and all District agency liaisons have been selected. The Family Court liaison will be responsible for convening appropriate agency liaisons when a liaison referral is made by a District social worker or caseworker, agency attorney, or Family Court judicial officer for interagency coordination.

The primary objectives for Family Court liaison activities during FY 2003 will be to:

- 1) support agency social workers and caseworkers in identifying and accessing client-appropriate social and related services across District agencies to achieve safety and permanence for children and families involved in the child welfare system and to identify diversion options for delinquent and status offending youth, where appropriate; 2) provide to the Family Court information on the availability and provision of such services and resources for a child, individual or family involved in a child abuse or neglect, juvenile or related Family Court proceeding; and 3) address

systemic barriers to coordinating service delivery to achieve timely judicial decision making. Continued engagement and support of the Family Court in providing information on services ordered or recommended in related cases will be critical to achieving these objectives.

FAMILY COURT LIAISON REFERRAL PROCESS

Referrals for interagency coordination will be made to the Family Court liaison office on a case-by-case basis. The form to be used to make liaison referrals will be jointly developed by District agency representatives and the Family Court. The referral form will be used by the Family Court liaison office to capture agency specific and Family Court related-case information deemed critical to determining the appropriateness of a particular service or resource and the extent of multiple District agency involvement with the child and family. The Family Court liaison will provide such referral information to the appropriate agency liaison(s) on a need-to-know basis. It is envisioned that the District and the Family Court will enter into a memorandum of understanding on the type of service information in related cases that will be included on the liaison referral form and made available by the Family Court to the liaison office.

To the extent possible, requests for interagency coordination will be made prior to the next Family Court proceeding involving the child and family. Summary reports from multi-agency staffings and related case information from Family Court case management reviews may be provided to the Family Court liaison team at any time when necessary to achieve interagency resolution. Emergency requests for interagency coordination should be accompanied by information regarding prior contacts made to access a particular service or resource and date by which a certain determination must be reached by the Family Court liaison office.

ESTABLISHING OUTCOMES

The long-term outcome for Family Court liaison activities will be the creation of a seamless system of care for accessing client-appropriate services and resources across District agencies for children, individuals and families involved in proceedings before the Family Court. During FY 2003, Family Court liaison activities will be focused on addressing the service and resource needs of children and families involved in child abuse and neglect proceedings,

juvenile matters and related cases. These liaison activities should support the District and the Family Court in achieving safety, well-being, and permanency for children and families involved in the District's child welfare system, and diversion or timely case resolution for juvenile status offenders and children and youth with delinquency and related Family Court matters.

Achievement of this intermediate outcome will depend on the commitment of each participating District agency and the Family Court to collaborate for purpose of:

- Determining in a timely manner the outstanding social and related service needs that stand as a barrier to achieving safety, well-being, and permanency for a child and family, or reaching a case disposition for a delinquent youth or status offender
- Identifying the social and related services currently being received by the child or family from one or more District agency
- Resolving interagency coordination issues in advance of Family Court hearings

Accordingly, it is envisioned that the Mayor's services liaison to the Family Court will be responsible for the following:

- Facilitating collaboration between District agency liaison representatives and Family Court personnel to quickly obtain information on the services currently being provided or ordered for a child or family in related cases
- Convening Family Court liaison task force meetings to refine the processes and procedures for sharing information on social and related services between District agencies and the Family Court
- Working with the District's agency liaisons to maintain current information regarding the availability of services and resources across District agencies
- Reporting on the availability of services and resources and status of liaison referrals for interagency intervention

CRITICAL ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS

The overall success of Family Court service liaison activities will depend on the active involvement and participation of District agency liaison representatives and coordination of these activities Family Court case management personnel. Six critical elements must be achieved to improve collaboration between District agencies and the Family Court in coordinating service delivery by multiple agencies for children and families involved in child abuse and neglect proceedings and related matters before the Family Court:

- Selection of District agency liaison representatives and alternates who will be responsible for giving priority attention to social and related service requests involving children and families with an open child abuse or neglect case
- Maintaining a coordinated network of service delivery in key service areas that include safety assessments, clinical expertise, and resources and supportive services
- Establishment of interagency protocols for information sharing and joint resource development, including the sharing of information on available services and resources across District agencies
- Data collection on the social and related services needs and interagency interventions made on behalf of children and families
- Data collection on the type of information provided to the Family Court liaison office for the purpose of facilitating intervention
- Development of partnerships between District liaisons and Family Court personnel to facilitate the sharing of related case information
- Continued involvement and support by Family Court case managers and coordinators

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The integration of the District's social services and related information systems with the information systems of the Family Court will significantly improve the sharing of information on service needs and delivery in related cases involving the same child or family. The District and the Superior Court have each submitted reports to Congress on short-term and long-term Family Court information system integration efforts.

The District's long-term IT strategy is the full development and production of the Safe Passages Information Suite (SPIS), and establishment of the appropriate interfaces with the Superior Court's planned Integrated Justice Information System. A Program Management Office has been established in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders to design the operational concept working in close collaboration with the Office of the Chief Technology Officer. This operational concept will include the necessary interfaces to support the Family Court liaison function.

LEGISLATIVE WORKING GROUP

The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders and the Mayor's Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs have also convened a legislative working group to address any outstanding issues related to the confidentiality of case-specific information on a

particular child or family. This working group is reviewing and determining the need for amendments to District law to further facilitate the sharing of information in the context of the District's SPIS and Family Court efforts to improve coordination among multiple District agencies in the delivery of social and related services. Each District agency liaison partner will be asked to provide copies of any local or Federal law, rule or regulation that specifically precludes the sharing of information between District agencies and the Family Court, for the purpose of providing treatment or services to a child, individual or family involved in a Family Court proceeding.

Subject matter experts from appropriate divisions within the Office of the Corporation Counsel will serve as regular advisors to the Legislative Working Group and to the Family Court liaison task force, which is described below. Until such time as clarifications or amendments are made to existing District laws, District agencies will share pertinent information on services pursuant to a memorandum of understanding between the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders and the Family Court.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The District will collaborate with the Family Court to determine appropriate performance measures and baseline data for Family Court liaison activities. Criteria for determining success will be based on jointly developed performance outcomes for children and families and coordinated judicial decision making in related cases.

SELECTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FAMILY COURT LIAISON TEAM

The Mayor's services liaison to the Family Court has been selected from within the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders. All District agencies referenced in the Family Court Act of 2001 have provided the names and contact information of the individuals who will serve as agency liaisons to the Family Court. A contact listing of District liaisons is attached to this plan.

District agency liaisons to the Family Court will be familiar with the types of services and treatment resources available through their respective agencies, and procedures for

expediting Family Court liaison referrals. Agency liaisons will also represent their respective agencies in Family Court liaison task force meetings. The liaison task force will meet as needed to review liaison referral data and social needs assessments to achieve consensus on interagency strategies to coordinate social and related services. Agency liaisons will have access to the resource and provider service information within their respective agency, and report regularly on the availability of those services and resources. An alternate will be designated to serve in the liaison's absence.

AGENCY LIAISON ROLES

A brief description of each agency's liaison role is provided below:

Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)

The Child and Family Services Agency's liaison to the Family Court will be available on the J-M level of the H. Carl Moultrie Courthouse to confer with the Family Court liaison and CFSA caseworkers regarding the service and resource needs requiring interagency interventions. The CFSA liaison will also maintain current information on CFSA's policies, procedures and information on resources and provider services available through CFSA. The CFSA liaison will participate regularly in Family Court liaison task force meetings and follow-up on the status of liaison referrals.

Department of Mental Health (DMH)

The Department of Mental Health's liaison to the Family Court will maintain a regular schedule at the Family Court to confer with social workers and caseworkers regarding available mental health services. The DMH liaison will also manage the process for facilitating Safety Net and MAPT summary reporting on liaison referrals, and serve as the liaison's point person for determining the status of Access Helpline and Youth Forensics referrals. The DMH liaison will regularly participate in Family Court liaison task force meetings.

Department of Human Services (DHS)

The Department of Human Services' liaison, selected from the Strong Families Program, will be available to confer with the Family Court liaison to facilitate interagency planning on cases involving children and youth who are at-risk of Family Court intervention or Youth Services Administration residential placement. The DHS liaison will also serve as the primary point of contact to advise and provide information on all other DHS policies, programs and services for children and individuals with mental retardation or developmental disabilities, and delinquent children, youth and their families. Further, the DHS liaison will regularly participate in Family Court liaison task force meetings to facilitate services for families and children.

Department of Health (DOH)

The Department of Health has selected two liaisons for Family Court liaison activities. One liaison has been identified within the Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration (APRA). This liaison will primarily be responsible for accessing substance abuse treatment and services for Family Court and Family Treatment Court clients, and maintaining current information on the availability of substance abuse resources. DOH has also selected a liaison within the Maternal and Family Health Administration who will serve as the point person for maintaining current information on early intervention services and resources. DOH liaisons will participate in Family Court liaison task force meetings.

D.C. Public Schools (DCPS)

D.C. Public Schools has identified three individuals from the Office of Special Education Services and one individual from the Office of Student Services who will serve as liaison contacts to the Family Court. These liaisons will be available to confer with the CFSA liaison and agency social workers and caseworkers regarding the educational needs of a child who is the subject of a Family Court liaison referral. The DCPS liaisons from the Office of Special Education Services will serve as the primary point persons for facilitating interagency planning with CFSA on a child's special education plan and transportation arrangements. DCPS liaisons will participate in Family Court liaison task force and Legislative Working Group meetings.

Metropolitan Police Department (MPD)

A member of the Youth and Preventive Services Division's Family Violence and Child Protection Unit shall be the liaison for all Family Court meetings and assist in the planning process. Personnel from the Records Office will assist with expediting the processing of criminal history requests and provide training to members of CFSA's Diligent Search Unit (DSU) in the appropriate usage of the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) and the Washington Area Law Enforcement System (WALES) to query and interpret criminal history information for background clearances. CFSA will be granted limited access to conduct local criminal history background checks. Where a request is made to MPD to initiate a FBI record check, a CFSA worker will accompany the parent, caregiver, or other adults residing in the home to the MPD Fingerprint Analysis Branch for the taking of fingerprints. Personnel in the Records Office will provide training to the CFSA Diligent Search Unit on how to read the FBI response and all results/clearances received by MPD will immediately be forwarded to CFSA.

Where an MPD officer has conducted a criminal investigation into an allegation of abuse or neglect, and a petition alleging neglect or abuse is filed in the Family Court, the investigating officer will appear in court for the papering process to represent the disposition of the investigation and all other pertinent information, such as the criminal history result on the alleged perpetrator.

D.C. Housing Authority (DCHA)

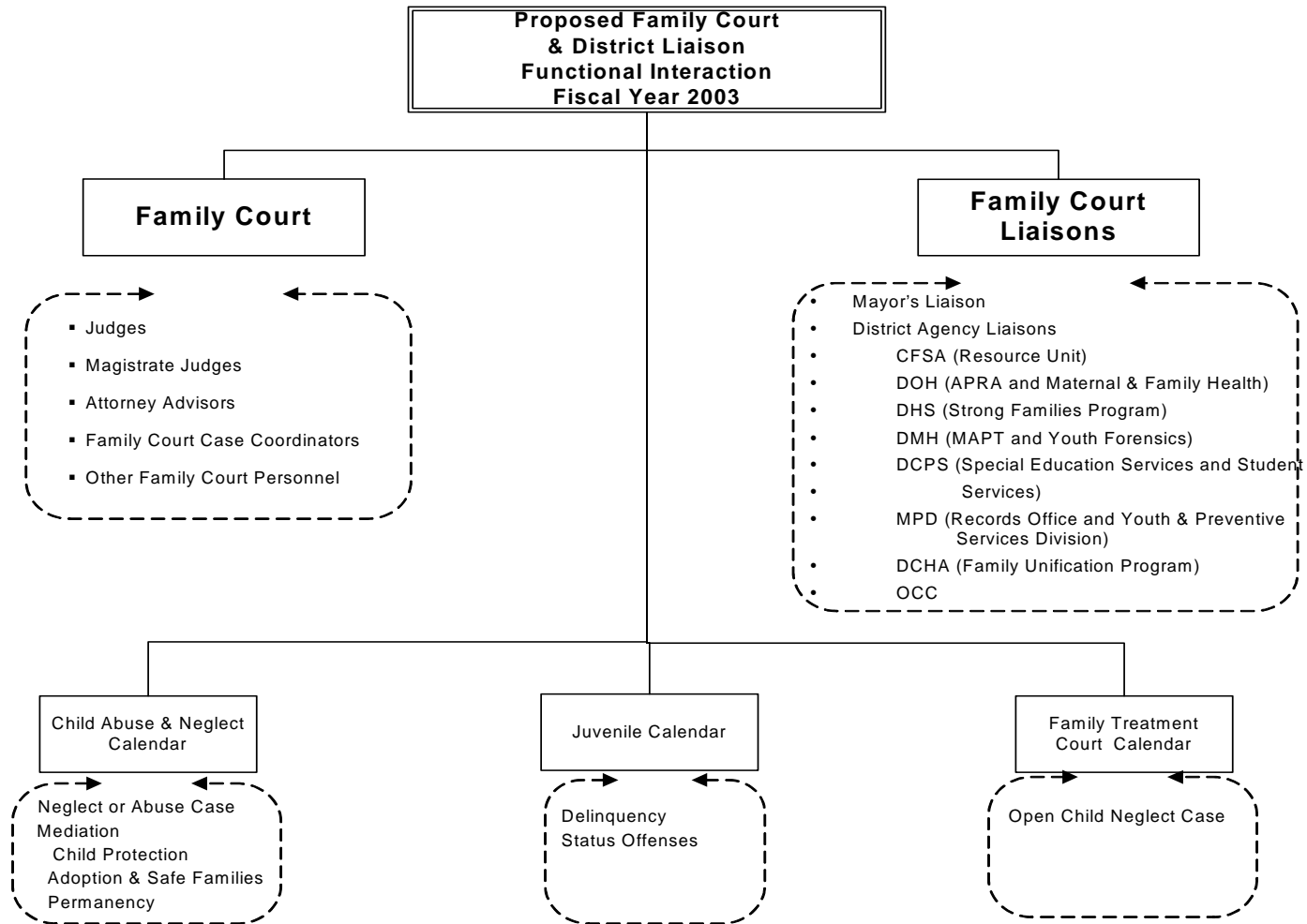
The D.C. Housing Authority's liaison to the Family Court will be primarily responsible for processing CFSA Family Unification Program (FUP) referrals for housing choice vouchers, based upon availability. The CFSA liaison, in consultation with the CFSA Housing Specialist, will certify to DCHA that the family meets the FUP program criteria, in the form of a referral, including proof that the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in the child's separation or the threat of imminent separation. Upon receipt of the CFSA referral, the DCHA Client Placement Division will determine the family's eligibility for housing assistance under the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Applicants deemed eligible will be referred to the Housing Choice Voucher Program for program briefing and voucher issuance. In the event such limited vouchers are not available, families not on any of DCHA's subsidized housing program waiting

lists will be informed of the application process. The DCHA liaison will participate in liaison task force meetings.

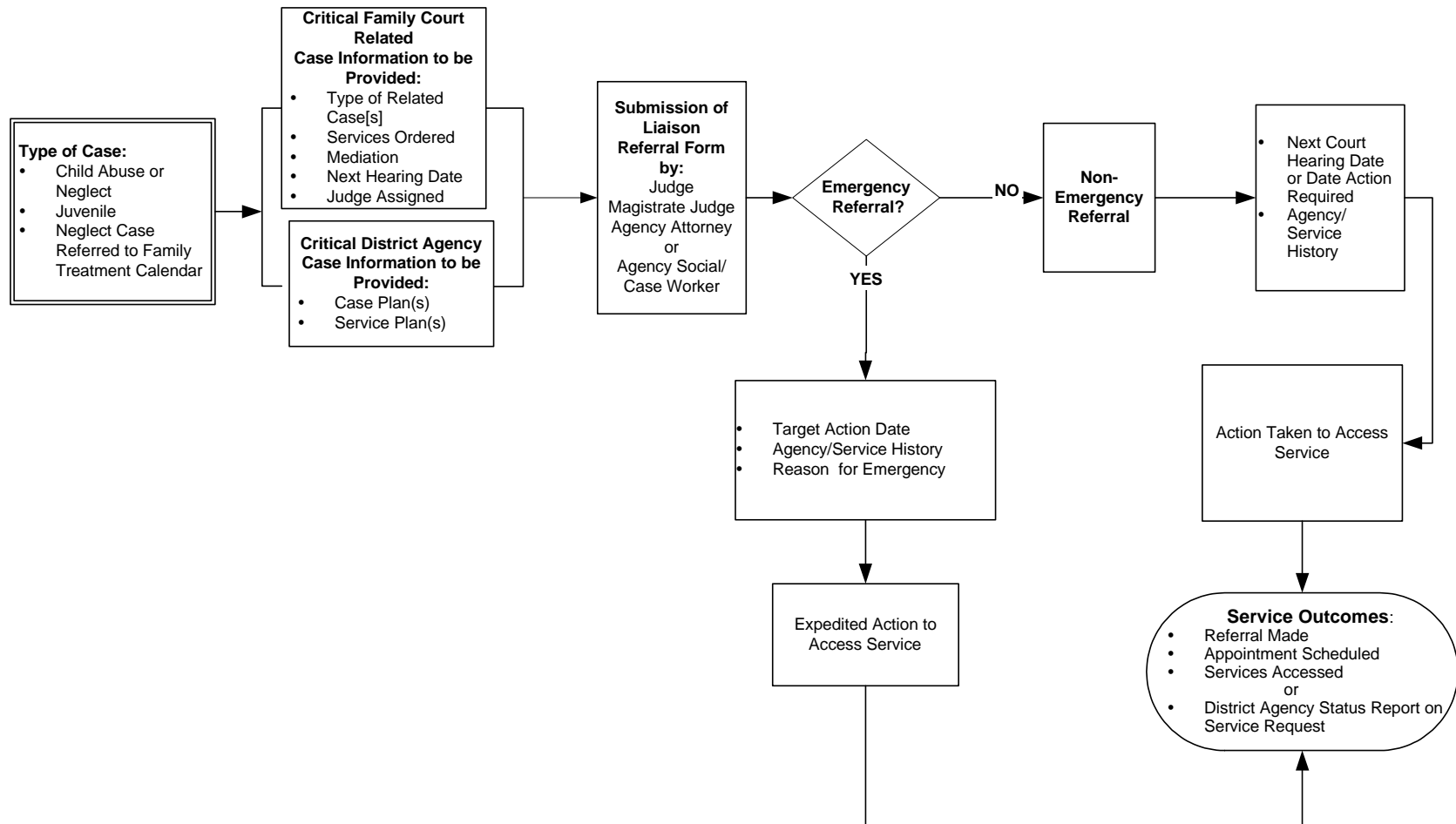
FAMILY COURT LIAISON FOCUS OVER THE NEXT 30 DAYS

Over the next 30 days, the Family Court liaison will focus on the following three priority areas:

- Facilitating meetings with District agency liaisons to prepare for the Family Court Cross-Training Program scheduled for November 22, 2002
- Working with District agency liaisons and the Family Court to develop a liaison referral form for social workers, case workers, agency attorneys and judicial officers
- Observing a random selection of Family Court proceedings and mediation sessions
- Co-chairing Legislative Working Group Subcommittee on Confidentiality



Proposed Family Court and District Liaison Business Process Model Fiscal Year 2003



DISTRICT LIAISON CONTACT LISTING

As of October 17, 2002

Lori Parker, Mayor's Services Liaison to the Family Court
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families
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